

Transportation News

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Martin Luther King Bridge Safety Improvement Plan Announced

Plan part of ongoing efforts to reduce crossover crashes

COLLINSVILLE - The Illinois Department of Transportation's District 8 and Bureau of Safety along with the Illinois State Police, Missouri Department of Transportation and city of St. Louis announced plans today to address crossover crashes on the Martin Luther King (MLK) Bridge.

"IDOT strives to construct and maintain the safest roadways for all of Illinois. Everything we do is aimed at getting people to their destination safely," IDOT Secretary Gary Hannig said. "As a result of these efforts, we will be making improvements to the Martin Luther King Bridge to reduce the number of crossover crashes."

As part of an ongoing department effort, IDOT has evaluated the results of the Road Safety Assessment for ways to mitigate lane departure crashes on the MLK and the resulting impacts to motorist safety, prevailing traffic patterns, and the bridge truss. Based upon these reports, a concrete barrier will be installed from the west end of the railroad structure in Illinois, across the MLK and terminate in St. Louis on the raised traffic island near Lumière Casino. The barrier's width and weight will require the MLK be reconfigured to a three-lane structure with one westbound and two eastbound lanes. The conclusion to eliminate one westbound lane was reached based on the recommendation of the study, project constructability and resulting traffic capacity and motorist safety throughout the area's roadways. To complete the project, ultra-high reflective pavement markings will also be grooved into the travel surfaces in the area.

"With these modifications, morning commuters on the MLK Bridge and the PSB could expect to experience an additional one to three minute delay on a typical commute," said Regional Engineer Mary Lamie. "Since two lanes remain for east bound travel, no impacts are expected for the evening commute."

Since January 2009, the Illinois State Police has effectively enhanced patrols in this area modifying the driving habits and addressing other criminal activities that use the bridge for moving between Illinois and Missouri. After installation of the concrete barrier, IDOT will

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continue to monitor this location to determine if these modifications are effective. If additional measures need to be taken, IDOT will address the possible solutions at that time with the other stakeholders, Missouri Department of Transportation and the city of St. Louis.

This work is tentatively scheduled for a July 2009 letting and is expected to be completed this calendar year. To safely make these improvements, the bridge will be completely closed to traffic when the project gets underway. The closure will be scheduled for 12 days and may be split into two separate phases. The dates of the closure will be coordinated with the contractor after the award of the contract. The estimated total cost of this project is \$2.5 million and will utilize state and federal dollars.